

Message Text

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51

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DRAFTED BY NEA:JBCRAIG/MSTERNER:KM

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NEA:ALATHERTON(SUB)

S/S:SRGAMMON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 072627

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG

SUBJECT: SUEZ CANAL CLEARANCE

1. DURING PUBLIC CONFIRMATION HEARING APRIL 10, ASST SECY DESIGNATE ATHERTON WAS PRESSED BY SENATOR CASE ON APPLICABILITY OF CASE AMENDMENT TO AGREEMENT BY THE US TO CLEAR THE SUEZ CANAL. IN RESPONSE ATHERTON ADVISED THAT IT IS THE INTENTION OF THE USG TO SEEK A WRITTEN EXCHANGE WITH THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT TO DEFINE THE SCOPE OF THE OPERATION AND OUR UNDERTAKING IN THIS REGARD. ATHERTON SAID THAT SUCH AN EXCHANGE WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE CONGRESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXISTING LEGISLATION. YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THIS IS FIRST PUBLIC MENTION OF OUR INTENTION TO SEEK A WRITTEN EXCHANGE WITH THE EGYPTIANS ON THIS MATTER.

2. IF GOE INQUIRES ABOUT THIS, YOU SHOULD FOR TIME BEING LIMIT YOUR RESPONSE TO STATEMENT THAT SUCH WRITTEN EXCHANGE IS NORMAL PROCEDURE IN ANY SITUATION IN WHICH US MILITARY FORCES ARE OPERATING IN FOREIGN COUNTRY.

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WE WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH GOE ON THIS MATTER IN DUE COURSE.

KISSINGER

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